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ISE599

April 1 2004

Synopsis and Response Paper of Some Extensions of the Concepts of Metrical Consonance and Dissonance by Harald Krebs

This paper explores the concepts of metrical consonance and dissonance in a broad and yet articulate way. Krebs first gives a brief review of previously studies. He then extends the definition by Yeston to combine the concepts of levels of motion and musical meter to define metrical consonance and dissonance. Another modification of Yeston's work is extending the applicable range of dissonance by considering both of the arithmetic relationship and alignments between levels of motion. He classifies the levels of motion into two groups: a "pulse level" and the "interpretive level(s)." The number of pulses elapse from an interpretive level to the next is referred to as "cardinality." Then he explains consonance and dissonance in detail using these basic definitions. By focusing on the surface of the music, Krebs categorizes consonance and dissonance into direct and indirect ones. Many examples are presented to support the cases of the classification. The significance and effect of time signature are expressed as primary consonance, which explain the unequal prominence of the levels in many dissonance collections. In the last part of this paper, more realistic and complicated situations are discussed, i.e., the combinations of various types of musical consonance and dissonance are investigated simultaneously. Four types of juxtapositions are described: consonance-to-consonance, consonance-to-dissonance, dissonance-to-dissonance, and dissonance-to-consonance.

Although Krebs indicates that this paper only constitutes a preliminary investigation of metrical consonance and dissonance, plenty of data for in-depth discussions and related concepts are also included. He explains the concepts articulately with realistic examples. Some ideas are truly impressive to me. For example, when he talks about the consonance-to-dissonance successions, the idea of the possibility of preparing the dissonance is interesting. Additionally, the analogy between metrical structure and pitch structure is another interesting topic. However, reading the various definitions and numerous examples, I feel somewhat overwhelmed. Although I did obtain the basic understanding of metrical consonance and dissonance from the various points of view presented in this paper.